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POLITICAL

THOUGHTS.

Incedis per Ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso.

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POLITICAL

THOUGHTS

BRITISH MUSEUM

AS the generality of people are diſpoſed to catch ideas ſuperficially, and to follow them with precipitation, it has been taken for granted, ſince the ſucceſs of our arms has given us poſſeſſion of every thing in America, that we have nothing left to do, but to make peace, upon our own terms, and the general cry has been for concluding it immediately: It is not ſurpriſing that this ſhould be the ſenſe of the multitude, who look no further than the ſurface, but even ſome things of note have been offered to the public upon this popular and vague preſumption.

THE foundation of this opinion ſeems to be, that as the French by the injuſtice

of their encroachments were the occaſion of the war, ſo now it remains with us as conquerors, to preſcribe the terms of peace; and as they have little or nothing to barter at the enſuing treaty, neither their former conduct, nor the fortune of the preſent war, intitle them to any better terms, than implicit ſubmiſſion; therefore, ſay they, let us take counſel among ourſelves how to conclude this *Truly National* war, not with a miniſterial, but a truly national peace.

I wiſh my judgment could concur in any meaſure with theſe opinions, for my heart is intirely with them. The ground of my diſſent is this; Whatever may have been the original cauſe of the preſent war between the Engliſh and French, yet in the courſe of it, another event has happen'd of more proximate and preſſing conſideration, if poſble, even than our American diſputes themſelves; I mean that vindictive act of political ſuicide by which the Empreſs Queen has ſurrendered to the French the total and abſolute command of the Low Countries,

tries, in contempt of thoſe numberleſs treaties, and all ſound policy, by which ſhe is the faſt and bounden ally of the Maritime Powers. Suppoſing, for a moment, the American war out of the queſtion; If in the year 1757, news had been brought to England that the queen of Hungary had put Oſtend and Neuport into the Hands of the French, as an Inducement to aſſiſt her againſt the king of Pruſſia, let me aſk, Whether England would have been an indolent ſpectator? God forbid! If therefore, being at peace, we ſhould have entered into a war to reſcue the Netherlands from the hands of the French, who can ſhew me the reaſon why, until thoſe countries are redeemed, we ſhould conclude a peace, being at war. Who ſays that the French have nothing to barter at the enſuing treaty? I contend, that they have that to ſurrender, or I hope deſperately to defend, which if they ſhould be permitted to retain, would be an infinite compenſation for all their expences, and all the misfortunes of the preſent war.

I do not know whether I may be ſingular in the opinion, but this proſpect has ſeemed to me to have been upon the ſurface of things ever ſince the ceſſion of Newport and Oſtend into the hands of the French in the year 1757: Nevertheleſs in ſo problematical a ſcience as that of politicks, I ſhould be far from ſurpriſed if it ſhould be treated as a chimerical idea, to imagine that any obſtruction on the account of thoſe towns ſhould ſtand between our arms and the golden branch of peace. But I am induced more particularly at this preſent time to examine this opinion, being at a loſs by any other ſuppoſition to reconcile thoſe ſteps which were taken very early towards a peace by the Engliſh, with the little progreſs hitherto made in that deſirable work. We are aſſured, that the firſt propoſals for a general pacification were made by the kings of England and Pruſſia at the Hague; we likewiſe have heard, that the reply on the part of the French was to this effect; That as their concerns with the Engliſh were quite independent

dependent of the quarrel between the Empreſs and the king of Pruſſia, they were willing to enter into a ſeperate negotiation, but that a plan for a general peace was beſide the buſineſs. If therefore the propoſals of peace have gone off upon that ſcore, I think it muſt appear to a byſtander, that we think our intereſts concerned where the French think they have nothing to do. What, therefore, can be the knot which ties theſe two cauſes together? What can it be but the ſurrender of the barrier? It cannot be merely the complication of alliances; for if our particular differences were compromiſed, they might be faithful to their ally if they can be faithful at all, and we ſhould not deſert ours; or, which would be moſt deſirable, we might both withdraw and leave the comparative ſtrength of our allies in *ſtatu quo*.

I am at a loſs what title to give to the following propoſals; if I ſhould call them propoſals for peace, I ſhall be told that they imply a new war, and new alliances; yet

yet ſtill I ſhall defend myſelf with this reply, That I mean by peace only that which is really and effectually ſo; that every other ſuſpenſion of arms, tho' it may flatter our indolence and ſooth our inactivity, is but a preliminary treaty to a new war and new alliances, and that thoſe who inculcate the contrary maxims are but as falſe prophets, who ſpeak to the people when there is no peace. Enough has been ſaid, tho' juſtly, againſt the treaty of Aix la Chapelle in reſpect to the doctrine in queſtion, and more than enough to the diſparagement of that miniſtry, who were under the hard neceſſity of making one no better. For if any one will recollect the factious temper and rebellious inclination of the people in this kingdom a little before the concluſion of the laſt war, he may perhaps be induced to think that it might not juſt then be the time to be punctilious in a foreign matter of inferior conſideration, when the pillar of our national and civil government was ſhaken to the very corner ſtone.

I am not going to defend the matter of the

the treaty, for I have nothing to ſay in its favour, but on the contrary, mean to infer ſtrength in ſupport of my preſent argument from thoſe reproaches which it univerſally labours under, that we may not again lay down our arms without reſcinding as much as poſſible the cauſes of future diſſention; being convinced by experience, that leaving the harſh and ungrateful buſineſs of war half done, is but poſtponing the evil to return upon us with redoubled force. There can be no reaſon aſſigned why we ſhould now make peace till we are in the way to make an effectual one, and thoſe circumſtances which had a tendency on the laſt occaſion, I will not ſay to juſtify, but to alleviate the accepting deluſive terms of peace, will now by their abſence leave us without excuſe if we fall into a ſimilar error. If there ever can be a time towards the concluſion, of a war, in which we may as ſtrenuouſly aſſert our Rights, and vindicate our true Intereſt, in the articles of Treaty as when we took Arms in their defence, it is now; Our trade is unimpaired,

our

our credit unblemiſhed, our country in vigour and free from all civil diſcord; with our enemies it is in every reſpect the reverſe. Let us therefore perſiſt, they will take care that it ſhall not be too long; let us be confident, but without arrogance in the inſuing treaties; let us perceive with modeſty and maintain with dignity, thoſe advantages which are fallen into our hands; and above all things not be overbearing, leſt our enemies ſhould but too juſtly preſume, that from the extreme of intemperance, we ſhould run head-long into the oppoſite extreme of timid politics, from whence we have been ſo lately reſcu'd.

The application of theſe maxims is univerſal whatever plan of accommodation ſhall take place; and the greateſt bleſſing that I do, or can wiſh to my country, is that fortitude and dignity of mind and manners which is becoming in a wiſe and great people.

I will ſtate, as ſhortly as I can, the preliminary points which I ſhall appeal to in the courſe

courſe of the following ſheets, as it is to be obſerved, that I do not intend to confine myſelf to thoſe articles of diſpute between us and the French, which occaſioned the American war, becauſe my chief ſcope is with regard to our connections in Europe, as they have heretofore been, and as they may become hereafter. The ſenſe of the public has been canvaſſed already with regard to terms of accommodation in America; therefore I ſhall only make a remark or two, upon thoſe things which were thrown out upon this ſubject, laſt year. The queſtion ſeemed to be, Whether we ſhould keep Canada, with the chain of forts upon the lakes and rivers which connect the Southern ſettlements of the French with the northern, and which by the fortune of war, are now fallen into our hands; Some people have ſaid that Canada, is a very barren-country, that it will take a great number of people from this iſland to plant it, and much expence in its ſupport, and after all bring in leſs profit to the mother country than

the little ſugar iſland of Guadaloupe: That the French are ſo ſenſible of this, that they have more than once had thoughts of deſerting it; and now that it is gone, that they treat it as a place they would not be ſorry to get rid of: From this kind of argument they infer, that we had better keep Guadaloupe than Canada. But all theſe premiſes may be allowed, and yet the ſequel fall to the ground; for it never has been propoſed to keep Canada for the immediate benefit of poſſeſſing the country itſelf, but with a view to prevent the French from making incroachments upon our own northern colonies; as the only attachment which they have to the country, is from a view of bettering themſelves at our expence: Therefore the true ſtate of the preſent queſtion with regard to the comparative value of Guadaloupe and Canada is, Whether the former be a ſufficient equivalent to this country for the proſpect of another war, to commence a few years after the termination

of

of this; but when or how to terminate who ſhall ſay? Or whether peace with Canada, though of no intrinſic value, be not better than a certain future war with Guadaloupe to lower the price of ſugar.

As to the chain of forts and ſettlements upon the back of our colonies, an argument of a very ſingular nature has been urged againſt the retention of them in our hands. We are told that it is not for the intereſt of England that our colonies ſhould extend far into the inland parts, becauſe in thoſe circumſtances they can have no connexion with the mother country; and moreover, becauſe they employ the hands of thoſe who live upon the coaſt to ſupply their neceſſities, inſtead of leaving them at liberty to other trades which might be made ſubſervient to the intereſts of Great Britain; that the foundation of this evil is in the univerſal inclination that men have to ſeize upon large and extenſive territories, and to prefer that imaginary dignity which conſiſts in a

kind

kind of barbarous dominion and ſplendor, to ſuch real improvements as are to ariſe from induſtry and the cultivation of trade and manufactures, which in a juſt eſtimation of things is ſo honourable to themſelves, and ſo advantageous to the mother country. That in conſideration of theſe things it muſt be the intereſt of Great Britain to confine our plantations as near as poſſible to the coaſt, as long as we hope to make them conducive to the intereſt of our own country; that theſe arguments muſt be very cogent with all thoſe who profeſs to cheriſh the colonies, not for their ſake but for our own; and that the moſt heroic and munificent politicians among us never pretended to any other principles in this inſtance than ſuch as ariſe from ſelf-intereſt. This argument is but very imperfectly ſtated, for indeed it is of a very extenſive nature, but I have no deſign to miſrepreſent it, becauſe I wiſh to have it granted for the preſent, as my objections are not to any part of the premiſes, but to the concluſion. It might perhaps be deſirable to have ſome

natural

natural ſeptum to divide the inner parts of the country from thoſe which are near to the coaſt, ſuch as a ſandy deſart fifty or a hundred miles broad upon the back of our colonies, if nature had provided one, or a great wall like the Chineſe, if it could be made impaſſable; but I think paſt, or rather preſent experience ought to inſtruct us, that the remedy is fatal to have an enemy upon our neck, who always will be harraſſing and incroaching upon us. In ſhort, of theſe two evils which ſhall we chuſe; to have our people ramble into the country in the degree which they have done, or ſhall we leave a perpetual cauſe for wars between the French and ourſelves on account of the diſputes between our reſpective American colonies; not to mention the depredations continually to be committed, or perhaps the loſs of ſome of them in a leſs fortunate day, or leſs vigilant adminiſtration.

BUT to return to the conſideration of our connexions in Europe; The firſt point which

which I ſhould wiſh to have ſtated as the baſis of all that is to come, is with regard to continental connexions, a term which it has in general been the faſhion to uſe as matter of unqueſtionable reproach to the miniſter for the time being, and among ill-effected perſons has operated towards a diſguſt of the crown itſelf. The ſuggeſtion which has inflamed the zeal of indiſcreet men on this topic is this, That it is the attachment of Hanover to the crown of England which has brought upon us all the expences and perplexity of continual wars upon the continent. I do not mean to enter into this argument yet, but only to ſerve myſelf of it in this reſpect, by obſerving that the terms in which theſe reproaches are expreſſed, do not include any ſuch meaſures as have been, or may be hereafter taken for the ſupport and defence of the Low Countries againſt the encroachments of the French (and this is the point I am going to canvaſs) altho' from the overflowings of ſpleen, and ſome confuſion ariſing from the ſimilitude

of

of terms, both being caſes of continental connexion, theſe latter have ſometimes been ſtigmatized. I am not ſurpriſed to find a diviſion of opinions, even in a point ſo clear as the uniform policy and conduct of this country has been for many ages in reſpect to the advancement of the French ſo near to the coaſts of our iſland; yet I ſhould be ſurpriſed if this diſtinction may be not admitted, that it is a very different thing whether we enter into a war to preſerve the internal ballance of the conſtituent parts of the German empire, or whether we throw our weight into the general ballance of Europe to prevent the overgrowth of the French power in thoſe countries which are contiguous to our own. If I may be allowed to avail myſelf of this diſtinction, and thereby avoid the odium which is ſo indiſcriminately annexed to every thing that bears the leaſt connexion with the continent, I ſhall think the better part of my argument ſecured; for when prejudices are removed reaſon will be heard without reluctance. Therefore to proceed to my

point,

point, which indeed has ſo often been proved, that I have little elſe to do than to repeat thoſe arguments which have been drawn up by much abler hands: The point to be proved is this, That it is the intereſt of Great Britain, and has always been ſo conſidered, to have a watchful eye towards the encreaſe of the French power in the Low Countries. I would refer any one to the ſtate of this queſtion in a performance intitled, *The Barrier Treaty Vindicated*; but I think it will be the beſt way to inſert the author's own words for the convenience of thoſe who may not have that work in their hands. Some people may think this point ſo clear, that I might ſpare myſelf the pains of inſiſting ſo much upon it; but as this propoſition is the baſis upon which I ſtand, I ſhould wiſh not only to have it granted to me, but likewiſe to have the deduction of the argument prompt in every one's mind.

" Let us next conſider the fatal con-
" ſequences that will attend the loſs of
" the

" the Netherlands with reſpect to Britain
" in particular. If France be once
" miſtreſs of thoſe provinces, ſhe will
" from that day have the *Command of the*
" *Narrow Seas*; ſo that our trade will
" neither be able to go out nor to return
" with any tolerable ſafety. We ſee of
" what conſequence it is thought to
" England, that Dunkirk ſhould be taken
" out of the hands of the French, or at
" leaſt that the harbour of it ſhould be
" ruin'd; and thence we may judge how
" fatal it would be to this nation, to let
" them get poſſeſſion of the *other Flemiſh*
" *Ports*, with ſuch an increaſe of naval
" ſtrength as that acquiſition would give
" them. Our coaſts and river would
" then be expoſed to perpetual inſults,
" and our trade would be in ſo much
" danger in the *Narrow Seas*, that we
" ſhould ſoon be obliged to give it over.
" But this is not all: Should France be
" ſuffered to be miſtreſs of the *Nether-*
" *lands*, it is not to be thought the United
" Provinces could maintain their inde-
" pendency: They muſt either become

" directly the ſubjects of France, or live
" in an abſolute dependence on that
" crown: And the unavoidable conſe-
" quence of that would be, that the
" Great Naval Force of the Dutch,
" which hath hitherto acted in conjunc-
" tion *with us*, would then be turned
" *againſt* us; and ſuch a vaſt acceſſion to
" the Fleet of France, would give her
" ſuch a ſuperiority at ſea, as no one I
" ſuppoſe is ſanguine enough to think we
" could diſpute: We ſhould in that caſe
" not only ſuffer all the inconveniences
" that neceſſarily attend our being cut
" off from the continent, but we ſhould
" be perpetually unſafe in our own ports:
" For our whole ſtrength, when without
" Allies, is in the ſea; and therefore
" when that ſecurity is gone, we are in a
" ſtate perfectly naked and defenceleſs.
" And as our riches depend chiefly upon
" our trade, *they* alſo muſt ſink with it.
" Let therefore France but get the Ne-
" therlands, and *our* ruin needs not wait
" for that of *other* countries upon the
" continent: If France can force the

" ſub-

" ſubmiſſion of the States, and have the
" uſe of their ports and fleets, England
" muſt truckle to France, if the reſt of
" Europe would be content to look on:
" And if they ſhould not, all the efforts
" they could make would be of little
" ſervice to us. For while we have no
" maritime power on our ſide, we can
" have no help at ſea, where it would
" be moſt wanted; nor any ſupport in
" caſe of an invaſion, tho' its ſuddenneſs
" and ſtrength ſhould make it of the
" laſt neceſſity. And as for any efforts
" made in our favour on the continent;
" when the States are either ſlaves to,
" or on the ſide of France; we may be
" ſure they would be too weak to make
" any great impreſſion, or to cauſe any
" conſiderable diverſion in our favour.
" So that the ruin of England ſeems to
" be the certain conſequence of the loſs
" of the Netherlands: We muſt for
" want of ſtrength in ourſelves, or help
" from abroad, ſuffer the fate of other
" nations; only with ſo much the greater
" miſery, by how much our preſent

" con-

" condition is happier than that of " others.

No words can more fully or juſtly expreſs the ſtate of this point, as to the reaſon of the thing. It may not perhaps be amiſs to take a ſketch of ſome paſſages in hiſtory, which tend to its illuſtration. If any one will conſult the beginning of the 6th book of the hiſtory of Philip de Comines, he may ſee the paſſage at length, where he expreſſes his aſtoniſhment at the king of England (Edward IV.) to be an idle ſpectator of the conqueſts which the French king (Lewis XI.) made upon the dutchy of Burgundy, or rather he expreſſes his indignation, that an avaritious monarch and his mercenary counſellors, ſhould ſell the intereſt of their country in ſo eſſential a point, for French gold; for the king's connivance, and that of his miniſters, was ſecured by bribery.

And here I will inſert a remarkable occurrence in the Engliſh hiſtory, with regard to the conſequences of annexing the dutchy of Brittany to the crown of France by

by Charles VIII. as it contains the opinion of a prince who was reputed for as deep a politician, as ever ſat upon the Engliſh throne, with regard to this important point. It is very well known, that this was at laſt accompliſhed, by the French king's marriage with the heireſs of that dutchy. But during the life of the laſt duke of Brittany, before Charles VIII. had any proſpect of this match, he invaded that country upon frivolous pretences that the duke had given aſſiſtance to ſome of his rebellious ſubjects. The Brittains in their diſtreſs applied to their old allies the Engliſh for ſuccours; upon which occaſion, Henry the VIIth, in a ſpeech to the parliament, expreſſed the following ſentiments.

" For the conſequences of this action " towards this kingdom, it is much as " the French kings purpoſe is. For if it " be no more but to range his ſubjects to " reaſon, who bear themſelves ſtout upon " the duke of Brittany, it is nothing to us. " But if it be in the French king's pur- " poſe, or if it ſhould not be, yet if it " ſhould

" ſhould follow, all one as if it were
" ſought, that the French king ſhall make
" a province of Britany, and join it to the
" crown of France, then it is worthy the
" conſideration how this may import
" England, as well in the encreaſement
" of the greatneſs of France, by the ad-
" dition of ſuch a country that ſtretcheth
" his boughs into our ſeas, as in depriving
" this nation, and leaving it naked, of ſo
" firm and aſſured confederates as the
" Brittains have always been. For then
" it will come to paſs, that whereas not
" long ſince, this realm was mighty
" upon the continent, firſt in territory,
" and after in alliance in reſpect of Bur-
" gundy and Brittany, which were confe-
" derates indeed, but dependent confe-
" derates; now the one being already
" caſt, partly into the greatneſs of France,
" and partly into that of Auſtria, the
" other is like wholly to be caſt into the
" greatneſs of France, and this iſland
" ſhall remain confined in fact, within
" the ſalt waters, and girt about with the
" coaſts of two mighty monarchs."

THESE

These are the words of Henry VII. which do ſtand in judgment againſt him to this very day; for Charles was permitted to retain Brittany in the end by a peace, which was rather a bargain than a treaty; for lord Bacon relates, that there were payed to the King (Hen. 7.) 745,000 ducats in preſents for the charges of that journey, and 25,000 crowns yearly. There were likewiſe aſſigned by the French king unto all the king's principal counſellors, great penſions beſides rich gifts for the preſent, which whether the king did permit to ſave his own purſe from rewards, or to communicate the envy of a buſineſs that was diſpleaſing to the people, was diverſly interpreted: But the truth is this, peace was welcome to both kings, To Charles for that it aſſured him of the poſſeſſion of Brittany, To Henry, for that it filled his coffers.

The author above cited on this head, quotes the good policy of Queen Elizabeth, whoſe object being to weaken the

power

power of Spain in the Low-Countries, yet would ſhe not effect this by encreaſing that of France, but choſe the ſafer way by favouring the revolt of the United Provinces. The conduct of Oliver Cromwell and Charles the 2d, was diametrically oppoſite to this, for they both ſided with France; perhaps the French gold had again recovered its fatal operation; however that be, yet the watchful eye of Parliament was not to be cloſed by the golden ſoporific. The author quotes ſeven addreſſes of the Houſe of Commons, all crying with one voice to their unfeeling ſovereign, to ſecure an effectual barrier againſt the French in the Low-Countries. At length their importunity prevailed; the king gave them a ſatisfactory anſwer, and had it not been ſo extorted, a gracious one, "That he was reſolved to "ſave Flanders either by a war or a peace, "as the greateſt foreign intereſt of this "nation;" and ſpeaking of that part of the expence which the Engliſh were expected to defray towards the ſupport of the barrier: He adds theſe remarkable

words,

words, " And I believe you would give " much greater ſums than this will coſt " you, rather than the ſingle town of O- " ſtend ſhould be in the French hands, " and 40 of their men of war in ſo good " a haven over-againſt the river's mouth." From all this, the reſult unqueſtionably is, that it has always been conſidered as the intereſt of this nation, to extirpate the French from the Netherlands.

LET us now tranſport ourſelves in imagination to France, and ſee whether the converſe of this propoſition be true, that is to ſay, whether the French kings have not always conſidered it as the cardinal point of Gallic policy, to extend their frontiers on the ſide of the Netherlands. And here I will inſert the counterpart of the tranſaction with regard to the conduct of Charles the VIIIth, in the affair of Brittany. Here we ſhall ſee that a king of France will heſitate at nothing, to acquire poſſeſſion of thoſe parts which border upon the coaſt of England. But we muſt go a little higher in the

hiſtory, and take a view of ſome preliminary proceedings with regard to the Low-countries. Lewis the XIth, had amuſed Edward the IVth of England, with an engagement at the treaty of Amiens, for Charles then Dauphin, to marry the Princeſs Elizabeth his daughter (afterwards queen to Henry the VIIth) thereby to induce the king of England, not to interfere with his conqueſts in Picardy. Edward had been advertiſed of the French king's policy in this, both by his own counſellors, and by foreign ambaſſadors, tho' he would not ſee, and the inconvenience fell only upon himſelf; for this once it was a propitious day to poſterity, that the French king broke his faith.

In the progreſs of this affair, when no more could be got by any longer amuſing the king of England, he threw off the maſk, and Charles married the daughter of the duke of Auſtria, who had for her dowry ſeveral provinces in Flanders. This match was againſt her father's conſent, and was perpetrated by the aſſiſtance

of

of the States of Ghent, then in rebellion againſt the duke, who having gotten poſſeſſion of his children, betrayed the infant bride and her dowry, into the hands of the French king.

When this affair was compleated, Charles took his bride and acknowledged her as queen of France for the ſpace of ten years, and at laſt repudiated her, for no other cauſe, but to marry the heireſs of Brittany, by which he obtained the utmoſt of his wiſhes on that ſide; that is to ſay, the whole dutchy and coaſt; which country, by means of their former alliances with England, had continually been a thorn in his ſide; and the acquiſition of which, repaid him with every opportunity of infeſting this kingdom in his turn. How determined he was to ſurmount every obſtacle to the accompliſhment of this deſire, will appear by his embracing the only act of injuſtice, which could aggravate the foregoing, towards his own wife; for the princeſs of Brittany was at that time married to

Maximillian, the father of his repudicatd queen.

In the time of Lewis XIII. and during the minority of Lewis XIV. or rather in the reigns of Richlieu and Mazarin, we find them ſtraining every nerve, to accompliſh this deſign. Richlieu made a conditional treaty of partition of the Netherlands with the Dutch, (which however was fruſtrated by the treaty of Munſter,) if they would unite their forces to reſcue them from the Spaniſh yoke. His faithful pupil and ſucceſſor Mazarin, continued the war in the Netherlands with Spain for 12 years after the treaty of Weſtphalia had compos'd in peace every other kingdom of Europe; and though the ſword was at laſt ſheath'd *re infectâ*, yet it was not till his prophetic ſpirit had pointed out to him, that a match with Spain would hereafter give his maſter a colorable pretext to renew the war; and I am ſure no one who ever heard the name of Lewis XIV. can think, that he departed one tittle from the maxims of his anceſtors;

anceſtors ; for his whole life was but one argument of his ambition to encroach on the ſide of the Netherlands.

And altho' this courſe of politics ſeemed to be ſuſpended for a few years, during the adminiſtration of the duke of Orleans, yet the cauſes of this ſuſpenſion are very obvious, ariſing from the perſonal intereſts of the Regent, who ſeeing only the life of a ſingle infant between his hopes and the crown, according to the terms of the treaty of Utrecht, wiſely conſidered, that in caſe of his ward's death, the king of Spain would ſoon renounce his former renunciation ; and therefore, that it was his intereſt to obſerve the principles of good faith with England, Holland, and the Empire, thereby to induce them to validate his precarious title to the ſceptre of France, in their undoubted right to the ſeparation of the two crowns. However, we find this policy revived in its full extent, during the late war. The treaty of Nymphenberg, which the elector of Bavaria was made

made to ſign as a preliminary, to the ſupport which he was to expect from the French as a candidate for the Empire, was, that he ſhould renounce the barrier treaty in his imperial capacity, and agree that France ſhould retain whatever towns ſhe might conquer in the Auſtrian Netherlands. Thus began the late war! how did it end? When the French perceived that the fatal day was not yet come, that they might retain as well as conquer, ever tenacious of one and the ſame policy, they ſought for no better employment than to diſmantle thoſe very towns, which they were then treating to ſurrender; and ſo they remain to this day.

It is a circumſtance remarkable enough, that what was their price in the laſt war for aſſiſting the elector of Bavaria to diminiſh the Auſtrian power, ſhould in the preſent become their pay, for contributing to its encreaſe.

Now we are returned to that place from whence we ſet out, to urge in argument

ment that crafty policy, whereby the French are at preſent in poſſeſſion of Neuport and Oſtend; to prove that they covet Neuport and Oſtend; which therefore, I conclude to be a ſelf-evident propoſition, as it proves itſelf.

But after all that has been ſaid, to prove that it is our intereſt to defend the barrier, and that of the French to invade it, which is a propoſition I would gladly contribute my mite to the ſupport of, as I think the everlaſting welfare of this country depends upon this being juſtly apprehended, I am ready to forego all the advantages of theſe arguments, and reſt my cauſe upon one which I have ſtill in ſtore; for when I come to the application, any one will perceive that it will equally ſerve to my purpoſe, whether it really be the intereſt of England to defend the Low Countries, or whether in the event that burden ſhall fall upon us, from that ſpirit of knight-errantry, and that continental frenzy to which thoſe who are unconvinced by the above cited arguments, muſt aſcribe all

ſuch meaſures. If it be our intereſt, let it be done effectually; if an irreſiſtible fate impells, let us wreck our frenzy at the leaſt expence: Therefore, I think myſelf prepared for both ſides; To thoſe who believe the very exiſtence of this country to depend, upon an attention to continental meaſures duly limited, I have already ſaid more than enough; To thoſe who are in diametrical oppoſition to theſe ſentiments, I ſay, that this madneſs, if it be ſo, ever has, and ever will infeſt our councils; and to thoſe few who may vainly hope by argument to avert this fatality, or to diſſolve this faſcination, *Nihilo plus agas quam ſi des operam ut cum ratione inſanias.*

HAVING now finiſhed the conſideration of the barrier, I proceed to the next preliminary point, which I wiſh to have canvaſſed. I will therefore offer a few words, with regard to the connexion of Hanover with Great-Britain, and its conſequences; and if poſſible, ſteer between the two extremes of treating that country

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and its ſovereign, with inſult, and the oppoſite miniſterial ſubſervience of conſidering the intereſts of that electorate, before our own; and ſurely, we need not go far for a criterion, to aſcertain upon what occaſions it may be our intereſt to interfere in Hanoverian concerns, which can be no other than to aſk ourſelves this queſtion, in each particular inſtance, Whether we ſhould have taken any ſhare, if the electorate of Hanover had been independant of the crown of Great-Britain? For every candid man muſt acknowledge, that all thoſe engagements which our preſent connexion with Hanover draws upon us, and which we ſhould not otherwiſe have embarked in, muſt be conſidered as the irkſome price which we pay for our liberty, under the preſent happy eſtabliſhment of the Hanoverian ſucceſſion. But the difficulty conſiſts in the unprejudiced application of this rule; thus far perhaps may we proceed together, but when we come to anſwer the trying queſtion, we ſhall ever divide, till we can ſettle ſome criterion, whereby to judge what

we ſhould have done in a ſimilar caſe before the acceſſion, which perhaps this diſtinction may ſerve to aſcertain; If the matter in queſtion be merely a provincial concern of the Empire, it certainly cannot relate to this kingdom, which is no part of the Empire. What ſhould it ſignify to us, whether the king of Sweden, or the elector of Hanover, poſſeſs Bremen and Verden; or how will it effect us, though the king of Pruſſia from his ambition, and the encreaſe of his power, be likely to become a dangerous neighbour to Hanover. Ought we to have interfered, or even to have put ſuch queſtions to ourſelves, if the Elector of Hanover had not been king of Great-Britain?

On the contrary, if the caſe be of geueral concern to the balance of power in Europe, as if it were to ſupport the proteſtant intereſt in Germany, by ſending aid to the Hanoverians, we ſhould in good policy be bound to aſſiſt them in ſuch an inſtance, although they had no relation to the crown of Great-

Great-Britain ; or if the aggrandizing the king of Pruſſia has a tendency to divide the ſtrength of the Empire, and thereby to render the natural enemies of France leſs able to oppoſe her progreſs, it would then be our intereſt to check his ambitious deſigns, either upon Hanover, or any other principality in the Empire. But to abridge an argument which I believe no man wiſhes to deny ; There are caſes of both kinds, where it would be our intereſt to contract alliances, and to ſend aſſiſtance to Hanover, as to any independent ſtate, and the oppoſite where ſuch proceedings would be detrimental to this country. Here lies the ſtreſs of the matter, the attachment of the electorate to the crown of Great-Britain, may embroil us in diſputes, and tempt us into connexions, contrary to the maxims of good policy ; but the ſeparation of it never could obſtruct us from entering into any meaſures for its defence or ſupport, whenever it may be for our intereſt ſo to do.

This ſeems to be the ſimple ſtate of the queſtion, as it muſt appear to a by-ſtander

unprejudiced, and unconnected with any party; And here I ſhall ſtop, for I do not mean to caſt an eye of retroſpective cenſure, upon the conduct our miniſters heretofore, with regard to this point, or nicely to weigh in the ſplenetic ſcales of diſaffection, by how much the bleſſings of the proteſtant line preponderate, againſt the oppoſite almoſt empty ſcale: No! I will leave ſuch a taſk to thoſe, who take a greater delight than I can perceive, in fomenting diſcord; To thoſe who wiſh to divide their country againſt itſelf, even in the ſight of the common enemy; To thoſe, who forget only that which they ſhould remember, and remember only that which ought to be forgotten.

I would rather wiſh at all times, more eſpecially at this critical juncture, to palliate every offence, and to compoſe every animoſity; and for this reaſon I will offer a few words in defence of the Hanoverian meaſures, which ſome late miniſters have taken, not ſo much from the meaſures themſelves, as from collateral circumſtances

ſtances; for every one muſt wiſh that the renunciation of Hanover had taken place inſtantly upon the acceſſion; but how could that have been? Geo. I. was a foreigner, called to a precarious throne, certainly contrary to the inclination of many of his ſubjects; was this the time to have neglected the only dominions to which he had an undiſputed title? Let any candid man ſuppoſe himſelf, in ſimilar circumſtances, brought into a country of which he was not a native, and hardly welcome, and if any ſuch man can imagine that he ſhould immediately have forgotten all the former attachments of civil and domeſtic affection, and only conceived an heroic zeal for the intereſts of a factious people, in contempt of his own ſafety, he muſt deceive himſelf through ignorance of all the actuating principles of human nature. If the tenderneſs of affection for our Native Country may in a moment be extinguiſhed by this political ſtoicism, God grant, at leaſt, that the experience of this fatal truth may long be with-held from us.

But if I could even aſſume the ſentiments of a proteſtant Jacobite in former days, I could not decently have avowed a wiſh for the expulſion of a family from this crown, without ſecuring to them a peaceable and proſperous retreat to their undiſputed dominions, from whence they were invited by us for the ſupport of the proteſtant cauſe by a public, premeditate, authentic act of ſtate. Well, then, What is the preciſe period from which we may account the ſucceſſion to have been eſtabliſhed in perfect ſecurity; let them give anſwer who are come lateſt from the Pretender's cabinet; for from that moment it is that the miniſters of the crown are without excuſe whenever they may have adviſed, concerted, or not oppoſed any ſuch Hanoverian meaſures as may not have been conſiſtent with the dignity and intereſts of this country. This their condemnation is founded in the letter of the Act of Settlement itſelf. I do not mean by the moſt diſtant implication to cenſure any meaſures that are paſt, for I have no deſire or occaſion to inliſt on either

either ſide in ſo invidious a queſtion; eſpecially at the expence of reviving old animoſities; and I think it a more deſirable office to moderate than to decide; but thus much I cannot omit to obſerve, as I ſhall uſe it in argument, that it has come to paſs either from the miſconduct of the miniſtry, or the impatient ſpirit of the people, that great clamour and diſcontent has ariſen on this head. Therefore until it ſhall be proved, or even preſumed to be of advantage for a kingdom to be divided againſt itſelf, I muſt claim this inference, that the attachment of the Electoral dominions to the Crown of Great Britain has not hitherto been of advantage to it.

Before I leave this ſubject, I will ſtate one circumſtance to the publick with regard to our late conduct in reſpect to Hanoverian meaſures. It has been ſuppoſed an inconſiſtence in thoſe, who by principle and former declarations, ought in general to oppoſe them, to be found not only conſenting, but carrying them on with equal vigour, as any other operations of the war. But to theſe injurious ſurmiſes, I think there is a moſt perfect and compleat

anſwer. Let any one peruſe the addreſs of the Houſe of Commons, at the meeting of the Parliament in November 1755; That they thought themſelves bound in honour and gratitude, to defend any of his Majeſty's dominions, tho' not appertaining to the crown of Great-Britain, if the French ſhould be ſo injurious as to attack them in reſentment for the meaſures his Majeſty ſhould have taken, in ſupport of his American concerns. I do not intend to enter into the diſcuſſion of the point, whether we were or were not ſo bound, (though every one muſt acknowledge it to be a very hard caſe upon the electorate) or whether this addreſs was not an invitation to the French to attack it; but thus much is infallible, that the parliament is not at liberty to retract its ſolemn engagements, and I am ſure it would be the leaſt evil, a thouſand times, to engage in a German war, than once to break the faith of parliament; thoſe therefore who oppoſed the addreſs at that time, are now peculiarly juſtified to carry on this continental war with vigour, when unavoidably entailed upon them.

IT may eaſily be perceived, by the tenor of the foregoing arguments, that ſome doubts are implied about the general expediency of Hanoverian meaſures, which may be ſuſpected by ſome men to ariſe rather from the contagion of vulgar and popular prejudice, than from the principles of truth and ſound policy. It is ſaid, and is undoubtedly true, that a commercial nation cannot ſubſiſt without foreign connections; but ſtill the inference remains to be juſtified, that it really is *tanti* to be at the expence which this nation has incurred for the ſake of the Trade to the Electorate, as it is ſecured to us in conſequence of being under the ſame crown. Is the Electorate to be conſidered as a colony of England? Are they reſtrained from purchaſing manufactures from all other countries? Are they prohibited from all foreign markets except the Engliſh? Are they bound to navigate with Engliſh ſailors upon Engliſh bottoms? What bounties are given there upon the imports or exports in favour of the Engliſh merchant?

THESE ſeem to be the points upon which the queſtion turns; for inaſmuch as it is a trade of equality between the two countries, that is to ſay, that we take their goods and they take ours, becauſe it is mutually convenient ſo to do, I cannot allow this to be taken into the account of the ſpecific advantages ariſing from the Elector of Hanover being King of England, as ſuch a trade would ſubſiſt whoever were Elector of Hanover. If therefore the cauſe be reſted upon this argument, the queſtion will ſtand thus; Whether the advantage in trade, which we receive from the Electoral dominions, in conſequence of their ſovereign being King of England, and which we ſhould not receive if any other foreign prince were Elector, be an equivalent for the expences which we have incurred to procure and maintain it? Let all perſons anſwer this queſtion for themſelves; Thoſe who hold it in the negative muſt wiſh that we were amicably diſengaged from the Electorate, and thoſe who are moſt ſanguine in the affirmative, muſt ſtill be aware, that however ſtrong their

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own conviction may be, yet the generality of the people will never be converted to that opinion, but will always be diſguſted with the appearance of Hanoverian meaſures influencing our councils; and upon this it is that I chuſe to reſt my argument for the deſirableneſs of ſeparating the Electorate of Hanover from the crown of Great-Britain; not upon the merits of the queſtion itſelf, of which ſome people have their doubts, but upon the infallible conſequence, which no one can doubt or make light of, That the attachment of the Electorate will continually ſupply matter of jealouſy and diſcontent to the people of this country.

HAVING offered what I have to ſay with regard to the two great preliminaries of the barrier, and the King's electoral dominions, I ſhall juſt enumerate a few other particulars as they bear reſpect to us according to the preſent condition of Germany. There are two points which ſeem chiefly to engroſs the public attention; The ballance of power againſt France; And the ſupport of the Proteſtant

cauſe,

cauſe, that is to ſay, the liberties of the proteſtant part of the germanic body in oppoſition to the encroachments of the catholic, imperial family. We are induced on the firſt account to wiſh well to the houſe of Auſtria, as the natural ballance againſt France upon the continent; and on the ſecond to the King of Pruſſia, as the head of the Proteſtant intereſt. The perpetual competition between theſe two powers has produced no ſmall embaraſſment in the ſtate of our political opinions; the advocates of each party ſtrenuouſly inſiſting upon the right of preference. The perplexity ſeems to have ariſen from the want of a very obvious diſtinction; The houſe of Auſtria is to be conſidered in two lights; As the ſovereign of the Netherlands holding our barrier in thoſe parts; Or as a diſtant power, which by intereſt, influence, and ſituation, is the natural protector of the German empire againſt the French, whoſe encroachments on that ſide would more remotely affect us. If we attend to this diſtinction, I ſhould think there could be but little doubt whether our intereſts are not more deeply

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concerned in the ſecurity of the Auſtrian Netherlands, than of the Proteſtant intereſt in Germany. For the contrary would be to prefer the liberties of a Germanic empire to the very exiſtence of our own. In the ſecond place (the Netherlands being put out of the queſtion) if the competition lay merely between the Proteſtant intereſt and the Imperial family, I ſhould preſume, that every political as well as religious principle would direct and confirm our attachment to the former. In the laſt place (the barrier and Proteſtant cauſe being both ſet out of the queſtion) our intereſts ſeem to be more remotely concerned between the hoſtile houſes of Auſtria and Bourbon, while the matter of diſpute lies in Germany. Let theſe three points ſtand in their order; firſt the barrier; ſecondly, the proteſtant cauſe; and thirdly, the ſupport of the imperial family in their diſtant hereditary German dominions.

We have greatly over-rated the importance of attending to the houſe of Auſtria in Germany from the inſeparable connexion

connexion of their intereſt with ours in the Low Countries; and what is very true of the latter, we have inadvertently aſcribed to the former; and, moreover, ſince the electorate of Hanover has been united to this crown, we have been more ſenſible to every fluctuation of intereſt and power within the precincts of the empire; which has likewiſe contributed to ſtrengthen the miſtake. Let us come to a diſtinct underſtanding of this matter: That it is on account of her being in poſſeſſion of the Netherlands that Auſtria is the natural ally of the maritime powers. For as matters are perplexed at preſent, we neither know what we do wiſh, nor what we ought to wiſh. We are not only embroiled more than enough in the affairs of the empire, but what is worſe, our deſires themſelves are inconſiſtent; we cannot obtain the completion of any one, but at the expence of ſome other. See the perilous ſituation we are in whenever a rupture happens between Auſtria and Pruſſia. If we unite with the former, where is the Proteſtant cauſe? If with the latter, where is the barrier?——The

inference which I claim from this deduction, and of which we ſhall come to the application preſently, is this—That it is is unfortunate for us, as a Proteſtant power, that the barrier countries are in the hands of the Auſtrians; more eſpecially as the Sileſian diſpute between Auſtria and Pruſſia is become ſo inveterate and irreconcileable.

I ſhould wiſh by this time to have proved theſe three points; (and if I have not, I muſt now be content to aſſume them) Firſt, that it is eſſential for this country to have a barrier againſt the French in the Netherlands; Secondly, that if we could have our option, it would be deſirable to detach the electorate of Hanover from the crown of Great-Britain; Thirdly, That it is our intereſt to bring the diſputes between Auſtria and Pruſſia to ſome laſting accommodation, as a war between them muſt always embroil us in the event; the one having poſſeſſion of our Barrier; the other being the head of the Proteſtant intereſt. Let it therefore be conſidered, whether the following

following diſpoſition of the three territories of Sileſia, Hanover, and the Netherlands, would not be more convenient to all parties, than that which ſubſiſted before the war. That the Queen of Hungary ſhould have Sileſia; the King of Pruſſia, Hanover; and the Netherlands be ceded (I do not mean united,) to Great-Britain. *

LET us poſtpone the queſtion of practibility for one moment, and aſk ſimply whether ſuch a diſpoſition would not be in itſelf eligible. It was ſaid in the beginning of the war, that the houſe of Auſtria would have conſented to an exchange of the Netherlands with the King of Pruſſia for his pretenſions upon Sileſia; and whether this was actually thought of or not, yet we may conclude, that the idea is not extravagant, as a negotiation was on foot at that time to have given them to the Duke of Parma, on condition that Sileſia might have been recovered for the Empreſs-Queen.

* *The propoſed eſtabliſhment of the Netherlands will be largely explained hereafter.*

Queen. And as the whole conduct of the war ſeems to imply, that the Auſtrians would not think Sileſia dearly purchaſed, tho' by the entire ſurrender of the Low-Countries, we may with ſome face of reaſon conclude, that any objection to the propoſed plan would not come from that houſe. Who then would have objected? Not the King of Pruſſia, becauſe the amicable ceſſion of Hanover, perhaps inferior in value, but more commodiouſly ſituated for his maritime views than Sileſia, would have diſpelled that ſtorm which then hung over his head, and has almoſt over-whelm'd him ſince.——Not Great-Britain, becauſe it would have drawn all our continental connections to one object; that is to ſay, to the ſupport of the barrier, which we muſt always defend, whether Hanover belong to us or not.——Not the elector of Hanover, for he is King of Great-Britain.——Not the Dutch, becauſe we ſhould have had no temptation to encroach upon their dominions; but, on the contrary, ſhould have ſecured to them, what they are moſt immediately

intereſted in, an effectual barrier againſt France.——If, therefore, ſuch a diſpoſition as this had exiſted before the war, might not the peace of Europe have been preſerved entire? and tho' it might not have been preciſely of equal advantage to every power concerned, yet would not an immunity from the evils of war, have been much more than a compenſation to any one for the difference?

THE principle does not ſeem to be ſufficiently attended to,—— that it is in great meaſure the ſituation of the countries in contention, which makes war more frequent and grievous. If on the concluſion of the Poliſh war, Tuſcany had been ceded to King Staniſlaus inſtead of Lorrain, wou'd not the houſe of Auſtria have been continually invading the former, and the houſe of Bourbon the latter? And perhaps after an infinite effuſion of blood have come to an exchange. It is not therefore merely the acquiſition of an extent of territory, that nations are jealous of with reſpect to each other, but their jealouſy encreaſes in proportion as their intereſts are claſhing or entangled. Does

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any one imagine that the houſe of Auſtria, wou'd have made ſuch conceſſions to the French in Germany, as they have done in the Netherlands? Certainly not. For with France in the heart of the empire there cou'd have been no ſecurity; yet if the one can acquire Sileſia and the other retain the low countries, both are gainers, and may extend their conqueſts without interfering with each other. Why may we not apply the ſame caſe between Auſtria and Pruſſia, the former to acquire their object Sileſia, and the latter to extend his dominions towards the northern and more diſtant parts? At leaſt there ſeems to be no induction to prove the contrary, from the circumſtances of the preſent war, which did not begin from general jealouſy of the King of Pruſſia's becoming too powerful, but from the ſpecial incompatibility of their intereſts, with regard to a particular country to which both had claims. The difference ſeems to be this, while Sileſia lay between Auſtria and Pruſſia, a war (and ſuch a war as wou'd not fail to embroil us) muſt inevitably enſue between them. But if the empreſs Queen had had Sileſia,

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and the King of Pruſſia Hanover, the German war might perhaps have been avoided, or if any war had happened on any other account it need not to have involved us. In ſhort, let any one look upon the face of Europe and judge, whether the ſituation of affairs before the war was not very perverſe; and whether, if it had been given as a problem to apportion Sileſia, Hanover, and the Netherlands, between the three powers Auſtria, Pruſſia and Great-Britain, the diſpoſition which did ſubſiſt then, or that propoſed now, wou'd have bid faireſt in the eye of an impartial by-ſtander, to diſentangle the complicated intereſts of many powers?

THIS is the repreſentation which I wou'd wiſh to make of the matter, as if it had ſubſiſted before the war, and to ſuggeſt, whether ſuch a plan might not have contributed by a kind of negative operation, to the repoſe of Europe then. If this may be conceived at all plauſible, in the ſame degree, may it be conſidered as our object to accompliſh it now. But here we come the moſt difficult point of all; for who can foreſee the events of

war;

war; how they may contribute to raiſe the hopes and fears, and with them the rights and pretenſions of contending parties? It muſt be acknowledged that the intereſts of France are not conſulted in the propoſed plan; but then on the other ſide it is the intereſt of *every* power concerned (the *maritime* powers might have been leſs pertinacious had it been the Auſtrian Luxemburg) to retrench the French encroachments, and put any thing into effect which is the common deſire, altho' repugnant to France. As to Great-Britain, Holland, and Auſtria, this matter is perfectly clear; for altho' the Empreſs-Queen wou'd ſuffer France in the Netherlands rather than not obtain Sileſia; yet if that can be otherwiſe accompliſhed, her old enmity would revive. As to the King of Pruſſia, it is true that his natural allies are the French, but at preſent he has very different intereſts, and will certainly catch at any terms to get with advantage out of the preſent war; and if any ſuch were offered (as the ceſſion of Hanover to him would certainly be) we may ſuppoſe, that he wou'd contribute his ſhare to recover the

Netherlands

Netherlands from the French. Surely, therefore, the united intereſts of Great-Britain, Holland, Pruſſia, and the Empire may ſo far prevail as to bring the French to reaſonable terms for the common ſecurity. But to aſcertain by what ſpecification, either of force or treaty, ſuch a point ſhou'd be accompliſhed, wou'd be more than my aim. I am only drawing the outlines of a political queſtion; as for the colouring it will be time enough when the piece is actually in the hands of ſome ſkillful artiſt; but metaphor apart, what I mean is, if my two chief principles may be allowed, that the barrier muſt be defended, and that it is for the intereſt of this country, (and Hanover too) to ſeparate that electorate from the Britiſh crown,—— if then the practicability be made the queſtion, I ſay that every thing is practicable to thoſe, who will purſue their point with ſteadineſs and vigilance. I am the fartheſt poſſible from imagining that a point engaging ſo many intereſts can be accompliſhed by one ſtroke. One day the Auſtrians have the advantage, and will come to no terms; the next day Marſhal Daun is defeated,

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and perhaps the King of Pruſſia intractable. But our buſineſs is to be vigilant upon all changes, to ſeize every advantage to the furtherance of one point; for by ſuch ſteadineſs the temporary and accidental obſtacles may be ſurmounted in any plan, where the fundamentals are not erroneous.

BUT to return to the merits of the propoſition as it relates particularly to England, the queſtion is this; would it not be an advantageous exchange for this country to have the Netherlands as their only continental object? In ſupport of the affirmative, I muſt repeat what I have ſaid before, that ſuch an exchange would relieve us of one incumbrance; that as matters ſtand at preſent, we lye open to the French upon the continent in two parts, but in the plan propoſed we ſhould be vulnerable only in one; and at this time we feel the double evil, being attacked in the one and betrayed in the other; and I fear ſo betrayed, that we may ſtill have a campaign in the low countries, before the concluſion of the war.

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LET us now enquire upon what eſtabliſhment the Netherlands may be ſettled, ſo as to become in the moſt effectual manner a barrier, and ſhield, againſt the encroachments and attacks of the French upon the Dutch and us. I mean to propoſe this as a general problem, without any reſtrictions, in which light it will become a very different point, from that which was canvaſſed upon the concluſion of the war occaſioned by the Spaniſh ſucceſſion; for then it was predetermined that the houſe of Auſtria ſhould have the dominion of the country, and upon that ſtock were inſerted the fruitleſs grafts of the barrier treaty. The chief cauſe of our entering into that war, was the ſeizure of the Netherlands by the French, thro' the treachery of the Elector of Bavaria; nevertheleſs all the expence which we ſuſtained and our unparalleled ſucceſs in the courſe of it, would not purchaſe or acquire to us, a right of chuſing and ſpecifying the barrier, upon any other terms, that the reſtitution of the ſovereignty to the houſe of

Auſtria.

Auſtria. For any thing that has yet been ſaid, this circumſtance might be for the beſt; but unleſs it be proved ſo, (and much more if the contrary ſhould appear) I am juſtified to ſay, that the general problem how countries ſo ſituated, ſhould be put into a ſtate of defence, for the ſecurity of Holland and England, was not fully laid open to the miniſters of that time, for their free diſcuſſion and choice. Let the queſtion therefore, be re-examined *de novo*, perhaps we may be led to conceive, that ſome other eſtabliſhment of the ſovereignty of theſe countries, than that which exiſts at preſent, might be more effectual for the purpoſes of the barrier, and leſs expenſive. The preſumptions at leaſt are on this ſide; the eaſy demolition of the barrier in the laſt war, the total neglect of repairing it during the peace, the ungrateful ſurrender of it in the beginning of the preſent war, with the infatuation of the Dutch to look on, while their barrier is betrayed into the hands of that very power againſt whom it was erected, are

all arguments that any change in the plan muſt probably be for the better. But indeed it would be little cauſe for boaſting, to hit upon a better plan than the preſent, (which could not eaſily be made worſe) unleſs the new one ſhould be really and ſubſtantially ſecure.

It may perhaps afford ſome us ſome light towards the ſolution of this problem, to conſider from what cauſes it has ariſen, that the Netherlands have hitherto been ſo ill defended. When theſe countries firſt fell to the crown of Spain, they were larger than at preſent, by the ſeven revolted provinces on one ſide, and all the French encroachments on the other; and at that time were not only capable of defending themſelves with the aſſiſtance of Spain, againſt the French, but gave ground of jealouſy to the Engliſh of the houſe of Spain, (is a leſs degree indeed) as the apprehenſion of France acquiring the entire poſſeſſion has done ſince. I ſay, in a leſs degree, for theſe three reaſons, becauſe Spain was not ſo commodiouſly

ſituated, to avail themſelves of the entire poſſeſſion of them as the French would be; ſecondly, becauſe France could more effectually annoy, and intercept, any ambitious deſigns of Spain in conſequence of their poſſeſſing the whole Netherlands, and would be much more intereſted ſo to do, than Spain would be if France had them; and laſtly, from the infinite improvement of the united provinces ſince their ſeparation from Spain, whoſe trade if it could be amicably brought to flouriſh under the auſpices of France, would be an invaluable acquiſition. (But to return)

When the independence of the Dutch was confirmed by the treaty of Weſtphalia, the French perceived that Spain was ſo weakened in thoſe parts, that it was their time to begin upon a regular plan of encroachments; and accordingly prevailed in a degree towards their point at the Pyrenean treaty. From this period we may reckon that the defence of the Netherlands has been chiefly at the expence of the maritime powers; for the domi-

nions of the Spaniards diminiſhing ſo faſt, (witneſs the ſubſequent treaties of Aix la Chapelle, Nimeguen and Ryſwick) and the attacks of the French becoming ſo frequent and deſperate, the Spaniards ſoon perceived that the expence of defending them, amounted to more than the revenues of the few provinces that were left; and therefore ſhifted that burthen upon the maritime powers, whoſe intereſt it became every day more and more, in proportion as it became leſs that of the Spaniards, both becauſe the latter would not enter heartily into the cauſe, and becauſe the reduction of the Spaniards ſo low, had brought the French cloſe to their gates; ſo that the caſe became urgent in a double degree upon the maritime powers, as they were juſt at that time deprived of their ally, when from the approach of danger they ſtood moſt in need of one. The point which I aim at is, that from the Pyrenean treaty, the houſe of Auſtria having loſt the greater part of their provinces in the Netherlands, grew very

very negligent as to the defence of the remainder; continually alarming the maritime powers by giving ear to the French propoſals for exchanging them, unleſs the Engliſh and Dutch would take the expence of the wars in the Low-Countries upon themſelves.

I will quote a few paſſages out of Sir William Temple's negotiations promiſcuouſly to illuſtrate, what I have juſt now ſaid.—" Nothing ſeems to me at preſent ſo neceſſary in foreign affairs, as for his majeſty to diſpatch away ſome miniſter to Spain, whoſe chief inſtruction ſhould be, to watch any motion of councils, or negotiations there, for the exchange of Flanders, and to divert them from any ſuch thoughts, by the greateſt aſſurance of his majeſty's reſolving to take it into his conſtant care and protection."——— The Spaniſh ambaſſador at the Hague laid this down for his maxim, " to hold the Dutch up to the beſt terms he could for his maſter, and to purſue the cloſeſt meaſures he can with them after the peace;

peace; and by their means endeavour the ſame with the king of England, upon belief that all three are *equally concerned*, in the preſervation of whatever is left in Flanders." Again, "I obſerved in ſome particular diſcourſes of Monſieur Beverning, in a humour when we are apteſt to tell truth, that at leaſt for his own part, he was extremely ill ſatisfied with the Spaniards, and with the war being purſued only for the intereſts of that crown, who contributed ſo little towards it. This I know to be the ſenſe of the ſubſtantial part of the people in Holland as well as his.

I think theſe paſſages will ſhew upon what footing matters ſtood after the Pyrenean treaty. Since that time, the dominions of the houſe of Auſtria in thoſe parts have been greatly diminiſhed, therefore no one can expect that this untoward plan ſhould have been mended. But for the proof and acknowledgement of this, which is ſo very clear, I ſhall content myſelf with appealing in general, to the well-known hiſtory of our connexions with

with the houſe of Auſtria upon that ſcore, and the little which that houſe has ever done in return. And now I think we need no longer wonder, why theſe provinces have been ſo ill defended, ſeeing that one ſide entirely left it to the maritime powers, who had a coincident intereſt, and that the maritime powers defended that which was their intereſt but grudgingly, becauſe another ſtate was to reap a conſequential advantage. If we come now to the inference;— What ſeems to be juſtifiable, is this. That until ſome plan ſhall be propoſed, approved, and put into effect, to ſtrengthen the hands of the Auſtrians in the Low-Countries, by redeeming from the French thoſe provinces of which they have been diveſted, the beſt ſtep would be, to tranſfer the ſovereignty, and revenues, of them to ſome power, who would not be a dead weight upon the maritime ſtates, and leave them in the lurch, but heartily conſpire to put the Netherlands really and effectually into a condition of defence. Don't let us turn our eyes upon any par-

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ticular ſpecification of ſuch power; this will be the next topic. But I would wiſh to have the general principle underſtood, that the great obſtacle to the defence of this country would be removed, if the ſovereignty and revenues were aſſigned to thoſe, who ſhould be abſolutely intereſted in its defence. Who this power ſhould be, we come in the next place to enquire.

When the field is open many plans might be propoſed for conſideration; but that which ſeems to offer itſelf moſt naturally, (for reaſons to be aſſigned hereafter) is this. To transfer the ſovereignty, revenues, and poſſeſſion, of thoſe provinces which are left, into the hands of ſome independent prince, who with the alliance of Holland, and under the guaranty of Great Britain, and the Empire, may ſtand in the place of the ancient dukes of Burgundy. An alliance, which with reſpect to us may be conſidered as the right hand of the old Burgundian league. The houſe of Auſtria, it is true, are infinitely

finitely greater, and more powerful, than any independent prince, that we can eſtabliſh in the Low Countries; and if they *would* employ their whole force in the defence of them, undoubtedly they might be much more able to undertake it. But have they ever done this? Or can it be reaſonable to expect that they ſhould? For what motives can tempt any prince, to expend more in defending a country, which is not *his barrier*, than the revenues of the whole country will produce? This therefore is the utmoſt that the Auſtrians ever have, or ever will contribute. And what ſhould hinder an independent prince, from exerting himſelf as far as this? The revenue is as great to him as it is to them; nay greater. For what is ſunk to them in the maintenance of a governor's court, is to him the ſupport of his own; and the remainder which they carry to Vienna, he is enabled to employ, in fortifying his frontier, and maintaining his troops, in a readineſs for defence. It is his firſt and moſt immediate intereſt, to watch and to prevent

the very earlieſt attempts of the French to invade his country. He is much better qualified to effect this, as reſiding upon the ſpot, and more deeply concerned to do it, as his *all* will be at ſtake; whereas to the Auſtrians it is a diſtant and ſecondary conſideration. If this independent prince finds himſelf over-borne, he will apply for aſſiſtance to the maritime powers under whoſe protection he is. Neither is this any new burthen upon the maritime powers, for they will not have more to do, than the Auſtrians always leave for them, as matters ſtand at preſent. I ought to have ſaid they will have much leſs, by how much it is eaſier, to keep an enemy out of a country, than it is to expell him, when he has taken firm poſſeſſion. Herein lies the peculiar advantage of an independent prince, not that he is required to ſtand his ground, without any aſſiſtance from the maritime powers, (for neither ſo would Auſtria do), but that he is from his ſituation enabled, to uſe their aſſiſtance to the beſt time, and advantage. While theſe coun-

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tries are under the dominion of the houſe of Auſtria, that houſe receives the revenue in time of peace, and in time of war acts negligently in their defence, from a certain knowledge of the panic, that will ſeize the maritime powers, as ſoon as they ſee the French poſſeſſed of them, and from the conviction, that if no one elſe will defend them, the maritime powers *muſt*, for their own immediate ſecurity. Thus the Auſtrians have always had the convenience, of getting their own poſſeſſions defended at another's expence, and at a very great expence. For the Auſtrians waiting to ſhift the burthen, from their own ſhoulders upon the maritime powers, and the maritime powers undertaking it unwillingly, both ſides let it alone till the French are in actual poſſeſſion of the country. Then they are obliged at double, or treble the expence, to redeem that country, which they might have kept out of the enemy's hands. On the contrary, an independent prince, whoſe immediate intereſt it is, for the preſervation of his revenue, his

country,

country, and the lives of his people, oppoſes with his whole might the firſt attack, as ſoon as it is made, and only at the laſt extremity flies to the maritime powers for protection.

Beſides, a very fair opportunity offers, of re-uniting the Netherlands under the protection of the Empire; for as it is not reaſonable that by the exchange of Hanover, the king of England's vote in the electoral college ſhould ceaſe, why ſhould it not be transferred to this independent prince, and the provinces of the Netherlands be erected into an electorate. And this is the reaſon why I ſaid above, that the putting theſe countries into the hands of ſome independent prince was the expedient which ſeemed moſt naturally to offer itſelf. Then he is under the protection of the Empire, and in alliance with the Germanic princes as one of their own body. And now let me aſk any impartial perſon, whether an independent prince, thus bound by every the moſt intereſting conſideration to exert himſelf to the utmoſt *

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